

KATIE PORTER
45TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INVESTOR PROTECTION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
AND CAPITAL MARKETS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
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July 17, 2020

Bernie Han
Chief Executive Officer
Frontier Communications
401 Merritt 7
Norwalk, CT 06851-6205

Dear Mr. Han,

I write to secure your commitment to putting workers first and upholding the guarantee on your website's homepage, that "Frontier Communications [Frontier]'s Safety-First Installation follows appropriate safety procedures during installation, because the well-being of our customers and employees comes first."

Frontier's website features the proud sentiment: "At Frontier, we do things differently than other providers." However, according to the Communications Workers of America (CWA), Frontier has in fact lagged behind other telecommunications companies in responding to the coronavirus pandemic, having failed to implement appropriate policies to reduce contagion and community spread.

For months, our country's top public health experts have advised that the widespread use of face masks and frequent handwashing are the most effective among prescriptive measures to reduce the spread of the virus. Through their CWA representatives, Frontier employees have repeatedly and unsuccessfully requested that the company universally provide its technicians—who enter multiple homes and businesses each day—with sufficient masks and hand sanitizer.

These requests were reportedly met with resistance and indifference from Frontier management. Instead of hand sanitizer, Frontier offered degreaser hand soap, which the soap manufacturer confirmed was not approved to eliminate COVID-19. When CWA continued to push for hand-sanitizer, Frontier began offering bar soap and instructed technicians to utilize their "Igloo" multi-gallon drinking water containers to rinse their hands.

Frontier technicians report that they were threatened with disciplinary action for insubordination if they refused to enter a home to complete a job, even if a resident was sick. Several technicians have tested positive for COVID-19, but Frontier has allegedly refused to provide any information about whether the company notified customers who may have interacted with those Frontier employees.

All employers are obligated by law to provide their employees with the equipment necessary to keep them safe in the workplace. On top of the obvious risk posed to Frontier technicians, failing to provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to thousands of workers who spend their days traveling from one customer's home to the next endangers our public health.

In addition to immediately acting to provide Frontier employees with appropriate PPE, and in keeping with your multiple, public declarations of commitment to the well-being of your employees, I also request that you commit to maintaining worker protections during ongoing negotiations with CWA. Frontier employs almost 20,000 people. They stand to lose the most, as the company continues to address deeply rooted financial issues and short-sighted decision-making. Due to mismanagement, thousands of Frontier employees are now facing the possibility of unemployment during a global pandemic. At the very least, please provide them with the peace of mind of knowing that Frontier will continue to honor existing worker protections and benefits.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katie Porter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katie" and last name "Porter" clearly distinguishable.

Katie Porter

Member of Congress